



OFFICE OF  
**INSPECTOR  
GENERAL**  
UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

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# HIGHLIGHTS

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September 30, 2013

## Emergency Preparedness for Hurricane Sandy

Report Number HR-AR-13-009

### **BACKGROUND:**

Hurricane Sandy made landfall on October 29, 2012, in the eastern U.S. causing billions of dollars in damages, including about \$39.6 million in total costs and damages to the U.S. Postal Service. Emergency construction funding was required, communications were affected, and alternative continuity of operations locations were flooded.

The Postal Service has an integrated emergency management plan and hurricane guides to prepare for, mitigate, and respond to emergencies impacting its facilities. It established the Address Management System to capture correct customer address information to help locate displaced families in emergencies.

Our objectives were to assess the Postal Service's efforts to protect employees, mail, and other assets before and immediately following Hurricane Sandy; and to assess whether the Postal Service's Address Management System can benefit other agencies in response to future national emergencies.

### **WHAT THE OIG FOUND:**

In most of the 27 locations we visited, management implemented emergency plans to safeguard employees and assets, assessed damages, and quickly re-established operations. However, managers at four locations did not adequately safeguard employees and managers at 13 locations did not

adequately safeguard mail and other assets because they were not sufficiently trained. Also, seven of nine district and installations did not always properly complete and approve the integrated emergency management plan because of inadequate oversight and confusion over which facilities required the plan. As a result, employees, mail, and \$1.1 million of cash and other assets were exposed to increased risk. Further, incidents related to national emergencies could impact the Postal Service's brand.

Also, the Postal Service's Address Management System could benefit other agencies in future national emergencies.

### **WHAT THE OIG RECOMMENDED:**

We recommended management provide periodic training to personnel to ensure they are aware of procedures for safeguarding employees, clarify policies for facilities under mandatory evacuation orders, establish guidance for holding and moving mail and assets from facilities in mandatory evacuation areas, establish controls to ensure integrated emergency management plans are approved and updated at least annually, and clarify which facilities are required to maintain integrated emergency management plans.